

Walking with God: Reading the Bible

Bible Study at a Glance:

Summary of the study. In this study we will discuss the importance of reading the Bible in our spiritual walks with God. The Church has some pretty strong language to use on this topic.

(Explain to the Group) = You don't have to read this word for word, but this is the general idea of what to explain before moving on.

- **Q: These are questions to ask the whole group**
 - *A: Hopefully the group arrives at most of the answers on their own, but if they don't, redirect the discussion towards these answers, and be sure to tell the group the answers if no one quite got it.*

CCC/Verses and quotes to read out loud are in boxes.

CCC 133: The Church "forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful... to learn the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ

CCC 103: For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord's Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of God's Word and Christ's Body

CCC 104: In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, "but as what it really is, the word of God".⁶⁷ "In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them

CCC 109: In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to man in a human way

Matthew 4:1-11: Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 He fasted for forty days and forty nights,^[b] and afterwards he was hungry. 3 The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written:

'One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:

'He will command his angels concerning you'
and 'with their hands they will support you,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written:

'The Lord, your God, shall you worship
and him alone shall you serve.'"

Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

CCC 115: According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two senses of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral and anagogical senses. The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church.

CCC 116: The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound in

CCC 117: The spiritual sense. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs.

1. the allegorical sense. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism.
2. the moral sense. the events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction".
3. the anagogical sense (Greek: anagoge, "leading"). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem

Now let's look at scripture itself and see how Jesus used it. Notice here how he not only knows it, but has it memorized. Have someone read:

- Matthew 4:1-11

Very often people struggle with how to interpret scripture. Should it be taken literally? Metaphorically? How would we know which and when? The Catechism addresses those questions. Without going too deeply on this aspect of the topic, let's get a high-level view of what the Church says about it. Have someone read:

- CCC 115
- CCC 116
- CCC 117

It's worth noting that the Bible is made up of a variety of different genres of books. They're not all historical as people often assume. Some are poetic, others prophetic, some historical, etc.

Discussion Questions:

1. Let's go back to CCC 109. Have you ever experienced God speaking to you through the scriptures, and if so, how?
2. Did anything from the passages we read stand out to you? Anything confusing or maybe profound that hit you in a powerful way?
3. How do you read the Bible? How often? What works for you?
4. Do you have any favorite books or favorite verses that mean a lot to you?
5. Jesus had scripture memorized. What spiritual benefits are there to knowing scripture deeply?
 - *In addition to fighting Satan as Jesus did, the biggest benefit is that it helps us know God more, hear from him, and grow closer to him (see CCC 133 again)*